

OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY (OPA) COMPLAINT REPORT January – February 2012

OPA Director's Monthly Message

The Office of Professional Accountability's (OPA) monthly report provides information about Seattle Police Department (SPD) misconduct complaints that are investigated by OPA. This report includes summaries as to cases closed during the month of January and February of 2012, along with data on the number and classification of complaints filed, with a comparison to earlier months and 2011. Monthly reports include charts showing the percentage of cases closed with different types of findings, information about the OPA mediation program, and policy review and training recommendations when made.

January and February 2012 Highlights

- OPA closed 30 cases involving 68 allegations, similar to numbers seen this time last year
- 18% of the 30 cases involved a Sustained allegation, resulting in discipline
- 17% of the 30 cases resulted in a Training Referral, meaning that the named employee would receive training or counseling related to the complaint
- The remaining cases were closed as Unfounded, Lawful and Proper, or Inconclusive
- **One third of closed complaints were filed by an SPD officer or supervisor regarding another officer**

The Seattle Police Department recognizes, "A relationship of trust and confidence between the Department and the community is essential to effective law enforcement." Further, "All employees share the responsibility to promote accountability within the Department." DP&P 5.001.VII.A.11 and 11.001.I.

A review of OPA cases closed in January and February 2012 show that just over 1/3 of the complaints (eleven out of thirty) were initiated by SPD officers and supervisors against other officers. While some express concern officers do not hold each other responsible when problems come to light, it should be reassuring to see evidence that officers, in fact, do report misconduct.

If an employee observes serious misconduct or abuse, the employee is expected to intervene to stop the action and must report any criminal violation of law or serious misconduct about which they are aware. Employees also must take appropriate action to prevent aggravation of the incident or the loss of evidence. Failure to do so can subject the witness employee to a charge of misconduct.

Employees must cooperate in the OPA investigation process and truthfully and completely answer questions with material and relevant information known to the employee. Department policy prohibits an employee from retaliating against a person who initiates or provides information about an OPA complaint.

Further, employees are required to notify their supervisor if they are the subject of a criminal investigation, criminal traffic citation, arrest or conviction, are the respondent of a order of protection, restraining order, no contact order, or anti-harassment order, or if their driver's license is expired, suspended, or revoked , or if they receive an ignition interlock driver's license.

The SPD 20/20 Vision for the Future set of initiatives released by Mayor McGinn and Chief Diaz acknowledges that there are ways to extend accountability expectations beyond the complaint review process in OPA. As OPA works with the Department and community to enhance accountability, we can build upon the values already in place as represented by the high proportion of complaints that are referred internally.



Seattle Police Department – Office of Professional Accountability

Complaint Report January and February 2012

Cases involving alleged misconduct of SPD employees in the course of their official public duties are summarized below. Identifying information has been removed.

January – February 2012 Closed Cases

Case Summary	Case Finding
The complainant, a Department supervisor, alleged that the named employee, a civilian, operated a privately owned vehicle while her driver's license was suspended, misused sick leave, was absent from duty without authorization, and was insubordinate to a supervisor.	<p>Allegations and Findings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Administrative Violation of Law (Driving while License Suspended) – Sustained 2. Insubordination – Sustained 3. Unauthorized Absence from Duty – Sustained 4. Misuse of Sick Leave – Sustained <p>The evidence demonstrated that the named employee engaged in the misconduct alleged.</p> <p>Corrective Action: Twenty-day suspension without pay.</p>
The complainant, who was a customer at a fast food restaurant at which the named officer was working secondary employment as a security guard, alleged the named officer used profanity toward her and had an odor of intoxicants on his breath.	<p>Allegations and Findings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use of Profanity – Inconclusive 2. Use of Intoxicants – Unfounded <p>The evidence regarding whether the named officer used profanity was insufficient to determine whether or not he did. The evidence regarding whether the named officer had the odor of intoxicants on his breath demonstrated that the misconduct simply did not occur as alleged.</p>
The complainant, a Department supervisor, alleged that the named officer acted outside the scope of his authority when negotiating with a company that provides first aid equipment to the Department.	<p>Allegation and Finding:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unauthorized Representation of the Department – Training Referral <p>The evidence demonstrated that the named employee would benefit from discussing with his supervisors Department policy and procedure regarding negotiating with outside vendors for services or equipment to the Department.</p> <p>Note: The named employee retired from the Department prior to the completion of this investigation.</p>



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Case Summary	Case Finding
<p>The complainant, a customer at a grocery store at which the named officer was working secondary employment as a security guard, alleged that the named officer used profanity and derogatory language toward him and inappropriately asked him about a dog that he had with him, which the complainant described as a “service or companion dog” but which the store manager described as menacing other customers. The store manager had asked the named officer to ask the complainant to remove his dog from the store because other customers were complaining that it was lunging at them and scaring them. OPA added an allegation that the named officer did not possess a secondary employment permit for the site at which he was working.</p>	<p>Allegations and Findings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use of Profanity – Inconclusive 2. Use of Derogatory Language – Inconclusive 3. Violation of Rules & Regulations Regarding Service Animals – Training Referral 4. Failure to Possess Secondary Employment Permit – Training Referral <p>The evidence was insufficient to determine whether the named officer used profanity or derogatory language toward the complainant. The evidence demonstrated that the named officer would benefit from reviewing the law regarding a “service or companion animals” with his supervisor. The evidence demonstrated that while the named officer possessed a secondary employment permit for the store chain for which he was working, he did not possess one for the specific location at which he was working, in violation of Department policy requiring a permit for the location of the employment.</p>
<p>The complainant, whom the named officer encountered while working secondary employment as a flagger at a construction site, alleged that the named officer was rude, used profanity, and unnecessarily pinned the complainant between an open car door and the body of the complainant’s vehicle as the named officer was directing the complainant to move his vehicle from an area within the construction zone.</p>	<p>Allegations and Findings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unnecessary Use of Force – Inconclusive 2. Rudeness – Sustained 3. Use of Profanity – Sustained <p>The evidence was insufficient to determine whether the named officer used unnecessary force against the complainant. The evidence demonstrated that the named officer was rude and used profanity toward the complainant.</p> <p>Corrective Action: Ninety-day suspension of all secondary employment permits.</p>
<p>The complainant, a Department supervisor, alleged that named employee #1, while off-duty, contacted named employee #2, who was on-duty, and asked her to access a confidential Department database to obtain information regarding a family member for a non-law enforcement purpose.</p>	<p>Two named employees, same allegation and finding for each:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inappropriate Access of a Department Database – Sustained <p>The evidence demonstrated that named employee #1 asked named employee #2 to access the ACCESS/WACIC database for a personal reason and not for a law enforcement purpose, which named employee #2 did.</p> <p>Corrective Action: Named employee #1 – Verbal Reprimand. Named employee #2 – One day suspension without pay.</p>



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Case Summary	Case Finding
<p>The complainant, a Department supervisor, alleged that the named officer had failed to properly submit for processing approximately 29 traffic citations that he had issued.</p>	<p>Allegation and Finding:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Failing to Properly Process Traffic Citations – Sustained <p>The evidence demonstrated that the named officer failed to submit the court copies of about 29 traffic citations that he had issued.</p> <p>Corrective Action: Three-day suspension without pay and removal from status as a Field Training Officer for one year.</p>
<p>The complainant alleged that the named officer failed to adequately assist her in reporting a criminal situation when she flagged down the named officer for assistance as the named officer was driving past in her patrol car.</p>	<p>Allegation and Finding:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Failure to Take Appropriate Action – Lawful and Proper <p>The evidence demonstrated that the named officer acted appropriately, rendered adequate assistance, and acted reasonably.</p>
<p>The complainant, who observed the two named officers taking a person into custody, after other witness had reported seeing him cutting up street signs with a box cutter, alleged that the named officers used unnecessary force when taking this person into custody.</p>	<p>Two named officers, same allegation and finding for each:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unnecessary Use of Force – Lawful and Proper <p>The evidence demonstrated that the named officers used reasonable and necessary force to take an armed person into custody and deliver him to a medical facility for an involuntary mental health evaluation.</p>
<p>The complainant, a Department supervisor, alleged that the named officer lost or mishandled evidence being submitting to the Evidence Section.</p>	<p>Allegation and Finding:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mishandling Evidence/Property – Training Referral <p>The evidence demonstrated that the named officer may have improperly packaged or marked an item of evidence she was submitting to the Evidence Section causing it to be misplaced or permanently lost. Named employee's supervisor will review Department Policy on evidence procedures and discuss with her the importance of properly submitting evidence to the Evidence Section.</p>



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Case Summary	Case Finding
The complainant, whom the two named officers had arrested for a fraud crime, alleged that named officer #1 beat her severely and intentionally drove his patrol car in a manner that would cause the complainant to bounce around in the backseat of the car. The complainant alleged that named officer #2 was rude to her.	<p>Allegations and Findings:</p> <p>Named officer #1:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unnecessary Use of Force – Unfounded <p>Named officer #2:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rudeness – Unfounded <p>The evidence, including medical evaluations of the complainant by Seattle Fire Department Medics and emergency room physicians, clearly established that the alleged misconduct did not occur. The evidence, including holding cell video, demonstrates that the named officers were not rude to the complainant.</p>
The complainant, who was involved in a physical struggle with store security personnel at a drug store, alleged that an unknown Seattle Police officer was present and used unnecessary force on him.	<p>Unknown officer</p> <p>Allegation and Finding:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unnecessary Use of Force – Unfounded <p>The evidence, including in-store security video, demonstrates that no Seattle Police officers were present during the complainant's scuffle with the store security personnel. The evidence also demonstrates that the complainant likely suffers from mental health issues that might impair his capacity to accurately recall or articulate information.</p>
The complainant, whom the named officer was arresting, alleged that the named officer used unnecessary force and called her an inappropriate name.	<p>Allegations and Findings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unnecessary Use of Force – Unfounded 2. Use of Profanity – Unfounded <p>The evidence demonstrated that the alleged misconduct simply did not occur.</p>
The complainant, a Department supervisor, alleged that the named sergeant misrepresented facts to a co-worker regarding what another supervisor had told her about a Labor and Industry injury claim that the co-worker had submitted and that the same supervisor was "out to get her." This misrepresentation of facts caused the co-worker to initiate a groundless EEO complaint against that supervisor based upon the misrepresentations made to her by the named sergeant.	<p>Allegations and Findings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Compromising Confidential Information Entrusted to a Supervisor – Sustained 2. Failing to Meet Supervisory Responsibility Regarding Work Place Harassment – Sustained <p>The evidence demonstrated that the named sergeant had revealed confidential information inappropriately and that she had failed to meet her supervisory responsibility regarding addressing work place harassment.</p> <p>Corrective Action: Twelve-day suspension without pay and a disciplinary transfer to a different work assignment.</p>



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Case Summary	Case Finding
<p>The complainant, a Department officer involved in a domestic matter with another Department officer, alleged that she had given information to her four named co-workers and friends at the time, also Department officers that should have required them to report alleged domestic violence.</p>	<p>Four named officers, same allegation and finding for each:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Failure to Report Domestic Violence – Unfounded <p>The evidence demonstrated that the alleged misconduct simply did not occur as alleged.</p>
<p>The complainant, who attempted to report to the named sergeant what she believed to be excessive force having been used against her boyfriend by arresting officers, alleges that the named sergeant was rude, failed to communicate with her, failed to identify himself, and, in general, acted unprofessionally.</p>	<p>Allegations and Findings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discourtesy – Sustained 2. Failure to Meet Supervisory Responsibility – Training Referral 3. Failure to Comply with Complainant Process – Inconclusive 4. Failure to Identify Self – Inconclusive <p>The evidence demonstrated that the named sergeant was rude and failed to meet his supervisory responsibility. The evidence was insufficient to make a determination whether the named sergeant failed to comply with Department policy regarding the complaint process and identifying oneself to the public.</p> <p>Corrective Action: Three-day suspension held in abeyance for two years, with the suspension being imposed if the named sergeant engages in the same or similar behavior within the two-year period, and counseling by the named sergeant's captain regarding expectations of supervisory performance.</p>
<p>The complainants, two daughters who were passengers of an individual being arrested by officers for DUI, upon being told that their father was being arrested for DUI, alleged that other unknown Department officers had illegally provided them controlled substances.</p>	<p>Allegation and Finding:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Administrative Violation of Law (VUCSA) – Inactivated <p>The Department's Narcotics Section conducted a criminal investigation into the allegation and exhausted all available leads. The evidence, consisting solely of the assertions of the two complainants, who were intoxicated at the time and who failed to respond to numerous efforts by both OPA and criminal investigators to contact them for further information, could not be further investigated. Because of the seriousness of the allegation, the case was inactivated pending the discovery of additional investigative leads.</p>



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Case Summary	Case Finding
<p>The complainant, who was reporting to the named officer information that implicated the complainant's wife in a recent domestic violence assault against him, alleged that the named officer improperly threatened to forcefully enter the complainant's residence in order to arrest his wife for the reported domestic violence and that the named officer used excessive force when applying handcuffs to the complainant's wife after arresting her.</p>	<p>Allegation and Finding:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unnecessary Use of Force – Lawful and Proper 2. Discourtesy – Unfounded <p>The evidence demonstrated that the named officer was justified investigating the matter as he did and in making a mandatory arrest of the complainant's wife for an alleged domestic violence assault against the complainant. The evidence demonstrated that the named officer used minimal, reasonable, and necessary force when applying handcuffs to the complainant's wife when arresting her.</p>
<p>The complainant, whom a street vendor selling food had pointed out to several officers as harassing a female customer by touching her against her will, alleged that when the named officer and another unknown officer contacted the complainant to discuss the situation with him that they did so only because of the complainant's race and that they had no justification to temporarily detain him.</p>	<p>Allegations and Findings:</p> <p>Named officer #1:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Biased Policing – Unfounded 2. Unjustified Temporary Detention – Unfounded <p>Unknown Officer #2:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Biased Policing – Unfounded <p>The evidence demonstrated that the named officer and the unknown officer had a reasonable suspicion to temporarily detain the complainant to confirm or dispel their concern about the complainant unlawfully harassing the female customer, as reported by the street food vendor. The evidence demonstrated that the alleged biased policing simply did not occur as alleged.</p>
<p>The complainant, who was being detained by the named officer on the sidewalk awaiting Metro Transit investigators who were en route to investigate whether the complainant had caused damage to a Metro bus, alleges that the named officer was mimicking him and unjustifiably bent his thumb, causing pain.</p>	<p>Allegation and Finding:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unnecessary Use of Force – Training Referral 2. Discourtesy – Inconclusive <p>The evidence demonstrated that the named officer applied a minor "pain compliance" technique to the complainant's thumb, causing transient pain, but that he did not think it severe enough to have screened by a supervisor or more thoroughly documented. The Training Referral allows the named officer to discuss with his supervisor the protocol to be followed when collaborating with other agencies at the scene of an incident when force, even minor force, is used. The evidence was insufficient to make a determination whether the named officer was discourteous to the complainant.</p>



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Case Summary	Case Finding
The complainant, whom the named officers had arrested for a misdemeanor assault six months earlier and who at that time made an allegation of unnecessary force against the named officers, has been re-submitting to OPA his allegations of misconduct against the named officers over the intervening months, adding information along the way.	Two named officers and same allegation and finding for each: 1. Unnecessary Use of Force – Unfounded The evidence demonstrates that the alleged misconduct simply did not occur as reported or as subsequently reported and enhanced.
The complainant, a tenant in an apartment complex, alleged that the named officer was harassing her by allegedly telling the apartment manager that the complainant was “bad for business.”	Allegation and Finding: 1. Retaliation – Unfounded The evidence demonstrated that the alleged misconduct simply did not occur as alleged. Note: the named officer is deceased subsequent to this allegation and finding.
The complainant, a Department supervisor, alleged that the named employee misused her sick leave and failed to accurately report the use of it.	Allegations and Findings: 1. Dishonesty – Unfounded 2. Improper Sick Leave Reporting – Training Referral The evidence demonstrated that the named employee incorrectly documented and reported her use of sick time on one occasion but that her supervisor had ratified her action. The Training Referral allows the named employee to discuss with her supervisors the importance and expectations of her when using and reporting sick leave usage.
The complainant, a Department supervisor, alleged that the named officer disregarded direct orders from officers and supervisors at a crime scene to not enter an area of a crime scene.	Allegation and Finding: 1. Insubordination – Training Referral The evidence demonstrated that the named officer may not have been fully aware of her responsibility to avoid possibly contaminating a crime scene. The Training Referral allows the named officer to discuss with the supervisor the importance and expectations they have regarding the containment of crime scenes.
The complainant, a Department supervisor, reported that named employee was arrested by outside law enforcement agency for Domestic Violence when he brandished a gun while his ex-spouse retrieved items from named employee’s residence.	Allegation and Finding: 1. Violation of Law-Administrative—DV Harassment – Inconclusive The evidence demonstrated that an outside law enforcement agency investigated this case and the Prosecutor’s Office declined to file formal charges against the named employee. The evidence further demonstrated that the named employee armed himself to protect his property against two witnesses that were present with his ex-spouse.



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Case Summary	Case Finding
<p>The complainant, a third party, alleged that named officer used excessive force when he tackled her husband as he crossed the street following a Seahawk game.</p>	<p>Allegation and Finding:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unnecessary Use of Force – Lawful & Proper <p>The evidence demonstrated that the subject of the complaint disregarded named employee's orders not to enter the street pushing past the named officer. The named employee tried to stop the subject from behind and they both ended up falling to the pavement. The named officer was justified in stopping the subject and the subject admitted intentionally ignoring the named officer's efforts to stop him.</p>
<p>The complainant alleged that the named officer used excessive force and used foul language when placing him under arrest.</p>	<p>Allegation and Finding:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use of Profanity – Inconclusive 2. Unnecessary Use of Force – Training Referral <p>The evidence demonstrated that the named employee was among a number of officers dispatched to manage a large crowd of up to 300 people leaving two night clubs. While placing complainant under arrest named officer used force to control the complainant, however, witnesses were not contacted and photos were not available during the initial review of the use of force packet making it difficult to resolve some conflicting testimony. OPA has asked that this training referral be handled through the Use of Force Review Team with the named officer and his supervisor to discuss best practices under such circumstances. The complainant's account regarding the named officer's language was inconsistent and any profane language was unsupported by any evidence.</p>
<p>Complainant alleges that named officer may be having a close relationship with her neighbor whom she previously assaulted and was arrested by the named employee.</p>	<p>Allegation and Finding:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conflict of Interest—Unfounded <p>The evidence shows that the named officer is assigned as a Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) Officer for the Department and routinely places named officer in close contact with SHA tenants. The evidence demonstrates that the alleged misconduct simply did not occur as asserted by the complainant.</p>



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Case Summary	Case Finding
<p>The complainant alleges, when she was arrested and processed for Domestic Violence, she was denied a bathroom break and medical attention by 4 named officers and alleges 2 named officers illegally impounded her vehicle and 1 named officer was rude towards her and an unknown named officer improperly searched a computer thumb drive. OPA-IS also added the allegation of Failure to Use In-Car Video for 3 named officers.</p>	<p>Allegation and Finding:</p> <p>2 Named Officers</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improper Vehicle Impound—Training Referral <p>4 Named Officers</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Detainee Management—Unfounded <p>1 Named Officer</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Discourtesy/Rudeness—Unfounded <p>3 Named Officers</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. In-Car Video Policy—Unfounded <p>Unknown Named Officer #7</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Improper Search—Unfounded <p>The evidence showed that 2 named officers improperly impounded complainant's vehicle therefore, a Training Referral would benefit two named officers by reviewing the Department's Policy on impounding vehicles with their supervisor. The evidence also showed that the named officers arrested, processed and booked the complainant in a lawful and proper manner. The evidence demonstrates the named officers conducted themselves reasonably and courteously throughout this process. The evidence demonstrated the named officers did not violate the Department's Policy regarding Use of In-car Video. The evidence also demonstrated that the complainant's assertion that an unknown officer searched computer thumb drives that she possessed at the time of her arrest is unsupported by any other evidence.</p>
<p>Complainant, a Department supervisor, alleges that named employee was arrested for DUI by an outside agency and possibly failed to report it to his immediate supervisor.</p>	<p>Allegation and Finding:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Violation of Law-Administrative – DUI—Sustained 2. Complaint Process/Report Requirements—Sustained <p>The evidence showed that named employee was arrested for DUI and failed to report the arrest to his supervisor per Department policy.</p> <p>Corrective Action: 3-days suspension without pay; written reprimand</p>



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The categorization of findings, following an investigation was changed in 2012 to reduce the number of potential findings and use terminology more familiar to complainants and officers.

Definition of Findings:

"Inconclusive" (formerly Not Sustained) means the allegation of misconduct was neither proved nor disproved by a preponderance of the evidence.

"Lawful and Proper" (formerly Exonerated) means a preponderance of evidence indicates the conduct alleged did occur, but that the conduct was justified, lawful and proper.

"Sustained" means the allegation of misconduct is supported by a preponderance of the evidence.

"Training Referral" (formerly Supervisory Intervention) means while there may have been a violation of policy, it was not a willful violation, and/or the violation did not amount to misconduct. The employee's chain of command is to provide appropriate training, counseling and/or to review for deficient policies or inadequate training.

"Unfounded" means a preponderance of evidence indicates the alleged act did not occur as reported or classified, or is false.

All complaints, classification decisions, and findings are reviewed by OPA's civilian Director and the independent civilian OPA Auditor. Civilian oversight by the OPA Director and Auditor helps ensure that complaints are properly classified and that cases referred for investigation, including those noted in this report, are investigated thoroughly, fairly, and in a timely manner, and that the findings reflect the evidence available.



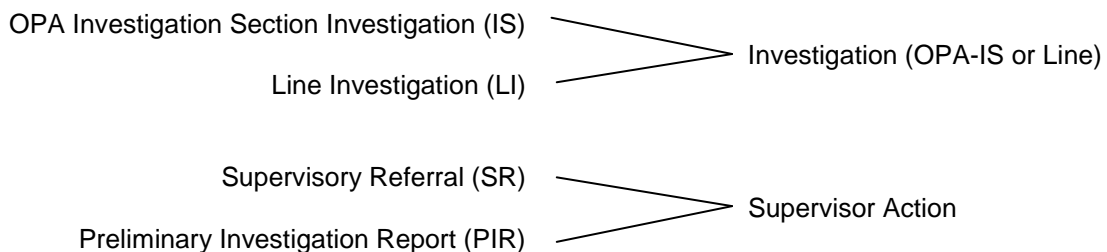
Mediation Program

The OPA Director and OPA Auditor selected 7 cases to be resolved through the Mediation Program during January and February 2012.

Of the 7 cases that were selected for resolution through the mediation program, 2 complainants have declined to mediate and 4 complainants have not yet responded back to OPA. 1 complaint is scheduled for mediation in March.

Cases Opened -2011/2012 by Month Comparison

	PIR/SR	Supervisor Action	LI/IS	Investigation	TOTAL	
Date	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012
1/1-1/31	17	33	20	16	37	49
2/1-2/29	24	27	18	14	42	41
3/1-3/31	19		13		32	0
4/1-4/30	31		23		54	0
5/1-5/31	37		19		56	0
6/1-6/30	29		15		44	0
7/1-7/31	26		9		35	0
8/1-8/31	39		16		55	0
9/1-9/30	22		13		35	0
10/1-10/31	27		15		42	0
11/1-11/30	21		27		48	0
12/1-12/31	26		14		40	0
Totals	318	60	202	30	520	90



Beginning in 2012, the system of how complaints will be classified has been simplified. Now, all complaints are either classified for investigation or handled by a supervisor. All cases, whether fully investigated or addressed by a supervisor will be reviewed by the civilian OPA Director and Auditor, to ensure the matter was handled in a timely, thorough and objective manner.

